STATEMENT GIVEN VOLUNTARILY TO INSPECTOR BEST
AND SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE BATES OF THE FBI
SEPTEMBER 16, 1975

RE: Investigation of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy on November 22, 1963, by Lee Harvey Oswald

First: As Assistant Director of the Domestic Intelligence Division of the FBI I was in charge of the possible subversive aspects of this assassination. We conducted a most exhaustive investigation both inside and outside of the United States.

Second: During the course of this investigation I had numerous conversations with many FBI personnel including Mr. Gordon Shanklin, Special Agent in Charge of the Dallas FBI Office in whose territory the assassination took place. I came to have great respect for Mr. Shanklin's thoroughness, reliability, assiduous efforts and his capacity to stand up under terrific pressures, tensions and almost endless problems of one kind or the other. Few men could have done as well as Mr. Shanklin.

Third: During our conversations he would refer from time to time to his own conversations with Assistant to the Director, John P. Mohr and to Assistant Director Alex Rosen and some of his men, for Mr. Rosen's Division handled the criminal aspects of the investigation. I do not recall Mr. Shanklin ever mentioning to me any conversations with men under Mr. John P. Mohr. With the passage of fifteen years I do not now recall just what Mr. Shanklin said concerning his conversations with these men or what they reportedly said to him.

Fourth: I do not recall either all of the subject matters I discussed with Mr. Shanklin about this case but to the best of my recollection the following comes to mind in a fragmentary or incomplete context:

1. We were both concerned over gaps in the case which would probably never be closed, such as what actually occurred while Oswald was in Soviet Russia between him and Soviet officials, or what might have occurred between Oswald and Castro Cubans had they met on occasions unknown to the FBI. The fact that the Soviets allowed Oswald's wife, Marina, to come to the United States troubled us for it was at a time when this was not generally being done. We wondered if they came under Soviet instructions and for a specific purpose but we could not find evidence of this. We knew Marina was much more intelligent than Oswald and this was thought-provoative.

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We worried together over many questions like this as we sought, largely in vain, to find conclusive answers. We discussed electronic coverage on Marina Oswald and how to cover her when she came to Washington to testify before the Warren Commission. (I believe she stayed at the Willard Hotel, but I am not certain, and engaged in some illicit activities with one of her official escorts).

2. One day during a conversation, Mr. Shanklin mentioned he had internal personnel problems in this case because one of his agents (the name was not given to me or if so I have forgotten this) had received, while Oswald was alive, a threatening message from him because of the agent's investigation of Oswald. I raised a question as to details but Mr. Shanklin seemed disinclined to discuss it other than to say he was handling it as a personnel problem with Mr. J. P. Mohr. I did not press the matter and we went on to other topics. No mention was made of anything being destroyed.

3. In another later conversation, Mr. Shanklin mentioned to me that Director J. Edgar Hoover was furious at one of his agents, James Hosty (I do not remember that I ever met or talked to this agent) and was going to give him a transfer out of Dallas. (To my knowledge Mr. Hosty was reported to be an excellent agent of superior integrity and ability). I inquired why. Mr. Shanklin replied that Mr. Hoover did not like the way Mr. Hosty had handled his part of the Oswald investigation and it was then Mr. Shanklin told me that it was Mr. Hosty who had received the threatening message from Oswald before the assassination. Mr. Shanklin did not mention that any message had been destroyed. He did say that Mr. Hoover did not want Mr. Hosty given his disciplinary transfer until after Mr. Hosty had testified before the Warren Commission which was certain to happen. Mr. Shanklin said Mr. Hoover did not wish the transfer to take place before, for fear members of the Warren Commission might find out about it and make inquiries as to why the transfer was made and this Mr. Hoover did not want. To my recollection no further elaboration on the subject was made. Again, no mention was made to me by Mr. Shanklin that any memorandum, letter or note had been destroyed. I know that Mr. Hosty was finally transferred but at this writing I do not remember whether it was before or after he testified before the Warren Commission.

Fifth: During the course of this long difficult investigation I did hear that some document had been destroyed relating to Oswald

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and that some others were missing, the nature of which, if told, I do not recall. I cannot remember who gave me this information or whether it was from one or more sources. Further, neither do I recall whether it came from within my Division or outside it. Rumors, yarns, stories, innuendos, speculations, were frequently floating about and unless there was a substantial or compelling reason there was neither time or need to pursue them unless instructed to do so. As it was, we were hard-pressed for time to follow up real and firm leads. To my recollection what came to me in this manner did not relate to the work and responsibilites of my Division and there it ended.

I have no additional, relevant comments to make in this case other than to say I think Mr. Gordon Shanklin did an outstanding job under the most trying circumstances. It was my impression he was often subject to dictatorial self-serving, self-protective coercion from FBI Headquarters in Washington, D. C.

Mr. Shanklin is a sincere, honest man in whom I have always had the utmost confidence and still do. It is unfortunate we did not have more men like him in the FBI and at the official level in Washington, D. C.

Respectfully submitted,

William C. Sullivan

Addendum:

To the best of my recollection, the conversation I had with Mr. Shanklin concerning one of his agents who had received a threatening message from Oswald occurred subsequent to the assassination of John F. Kennedy.

I would like to further state that at no time was I present or have any knowledge whatsoever of the identities of anyone who made a decision to destroy ~~an~~ the threatening note delivered by Lee Harvey Oswald to the Dallas Office of the FBI.

Respectfully submitted,

William C. Sullivan

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